



## America's Tank Division



# 501st MPs apply lessons learned

Story and photos by Sgt. Christopher Stanis

Training focus is derived from a number of ways.

One way is based off of the war on terror. "Instead of doing look-out points and observation points through woodlands and jungle territory, we're doing it through cities," said Cole. "Now not only do you have to change your tactics, you have to change the way you deal with people around you because you're in the middle of a very populated area."

With urban combat operations also come new risks, as Iron Soldiers deployed to Iraq saw.

The enemy Soldiers have been facing doesn't wear a uniform, so it is difficult to determine who is friendly and who is foe, Cole noted.

The change in fight tactics also effects convoy operations.

"(Improvised explosive device) identification," said Cole.

"We train Soldiers to look for anything that looks suspicious. (Insurgents) have been known to hide IEDs in everything from a pile of rocks to dead animal carcasses."

Leaders of all levels also develop training based on first-hand experience.

"We've been there; we know how it is," said Sgt. Tracy Sharp, 2<sup>nd</sup> Plt., 501<sup>st</sup> MP.

Combat veterans can bring what they think are the most important "lessons learned" to the table.

"Having experienced veterans around helps a lot," Pfc. Matt Griswold, one of the more recent additions to the 501<sup>st</sup>.

"Everybody who got back from down range is telling stories, but they are also giving advice about what to do when we get down there – personally and professionally."

Many leaders encourage the buddy system so Soldiers have someone to talk to if stress gets to great.

Professionally, Cole said it is most important to instill Soldiers with the significance of equipment familiarization and maintenance.

"If any of your gear goes down, it's useless," Cole impressed. "They need to know how to fix it when it if anything should jam or go down in the middle of a mission."

In addition to job-specific training, the combat MPs will conduct joint training with the division's infantry units. They also did this prior to the past deployment to Iraq.

"When we went down range, we conducted a lot of training with the infantry – such as personnel searches and vehicle searches," said Cole. "When it comes down to it we all work together. All of our missions intertwined to make the whole system run smooth."

Cole added that whether training on convoy tactics, or clearing a house, there is only one way to get Soldiers to the proficiency they need: "Train in a repetitious manner so that when it comes down to it they go in to muscle memory and just react."